

REMARKS

Claims 1-3, 5, 6, and 8-19 stand rejected. Claim 1 has been amended. Claims 3, 5, and 6 have been canceled. New claim 20 has been added. Support for claim 20 can be found at least in FIG. 10 and pages 10-11 of the subject specification as originally filed. The Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration in view of the foregoing amendments. No new matter has been added.

Summary of Examiner Interview

Applicant thanks Examiner Williams for his helpful comments during an interview with the undersigned and Martha Wilson-Byrne, Esq. on June 11, 2009. During the interview, claim 1 as now amended was discussed in view of the references cited in the Office action mailed January 16, 2009. Examiner Williams indicated that further consideration and search would be required.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §112

Claims 1-3, 5, 6, and 8-19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. With respect to claims 3, 5, and 6, now canceled, this rejection is moot.

With respect to claim 1, Applicant acknowledges that FIG. 9 of the subject application was inadvertently cited in the previous Amendment as showing the antenna being "parallel connected" to the external circuit bridge. Rather, FIG. 9 shows the antenna device 82 and the circuit bridge being separately connected to the chip module 80 through first and second connection surface arrangements 81 and 83, respectively. FIG. 10 correctly cited FIG. 10 as showing the antenna 92 as being connected in parallel to the antenna 91 that comprises the external circuit bridge 93.

For the purpose of clarity, however, Applicant hereby amends claim 1 to remove the feature of "the antenna device being parallel connected to the external circuit bridge" from claim 1 and add the feature of the antenna device being "operable to supply energy in a non-contact manner from outside the seal body to the switching circuit and to provide non-contact

transmission of data from the switching circuit regardless of whether the external circuit bridge is an open or closed circuit." Support for such amendment is found at least in FIGS. 9 and 10 as originally filed and the surrounding discussion in the subject specification.

New claim 20 now recites the feature of "the external bridge and the second antenna device [being] connected in parallel to the antenna device." Support for claim 20 can be found at least in FIG. 10 and pages 10-11 of the subject specification as originally filed.

With respect to claim 8, Applicant points out that the structure of the "the external circuit bridge [being] connected in series with a *second* antenna device," for example, reads on the embodiment of FIG. 10. As discussed in the subject specification, an antenna unit 91 is shown in FIG. 10 as comprising a circuit bridge 93 connected to an antenna winding. (See pages 11-12 of subject specification as originally filed).

In view of the foregoing amendments, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of these rejections.

Drawing Rejections under 37 C.F.R. § 1.83(a)

The drawings were rejected under 37 C.F.R. § 1.83(a) because they fail to show the "external energy supply device" of claim 1. Claim 1 has been amended to delete the term "external energy supply device." Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that this rejection is now moot.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1-3, 5, 6, and 8-19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Leck et al (U.S. Patent 6,420,971) (hereinafter "Leck") in view of Maloney (U.S. Patent No. 6,958,698).

With respect to claim 1 as now amended, the claimed seal device comprises an antenna device being operable to supply energy in a non-contact manner from outside the seal body to the switching circuit and to provide non-contact transmission of data from the switching circuit regardless of whether the external circuit bridge is an open or closed circuit. Accordingly, the seal device of claim 1 can continue to transmit data without the need of an internal energy supply, such as a battery, even when the external circuit bridge is an open circuit. The claimed seal device uses the antenna device to inductively couple, in a non-contact manner, to an external

source of energy, e.g., an electromagnetic field, as well as for data transmission. As a result, small and lightweight designs of the seal body are possible. Support for claim 1 as now amended can be found at least in FIGS. 9 and 10 and in the specification as originally filed on page 3, line 12-18; and page 9, line 24 to page 12, line 15.

Nether Leck nor Maloney teach or suggest an “antenna device being operable to supply energy in a non-contact manner from outside the seal body to the switching circuit and to provide non-contact transmission of data from the switching circuit regardless of whether the external circuit bridge is an open or closed circuit” as recited in claim 1.

For example, in order to provide continuous data transmission regardless of the state of the seal, Leck requires an internal battery 20, 48, 120. See Leck, FIGS. 1, 4, 8 and col. 16, lines 15-25, lines 30-41 and col. 20, lines 26-40. Specifically, Leck states that “[h]aving a power source, the seal is able to continually sense its own security state, unlike passive transponder seals which are only able to do so when they are energized by a scanning device.” Col. 5, ln. 62-col. 6, ln. 5. Accordingly, Leck requires a battery for such continuous operation. Furthermore, Leck teaches the use of an IR/visible transceiver to provide non-contact transmission as opposed to an antenna device as recited in claim 1. See col. 16, lines 5-14.

Maloney also requires an “on board battery 139” to provide continuous data transmission regardless of the state of the seal. See Maloney, FIGS. 6-9; col. 8, lines 51-55; and col. 9, lines 15-20 and lines 41-45. Although Maloney discusses embodiments in which the seal assembly does not include a battery, Maloney states that communication is lost when the seal assembly of such embodiments is tampered. Thus, as in Leck, Maloney also requires an internal battery for continuous operation. See Maloney, col. 5, line 65 to col. 6, line 10 and col. 6, lines 41-56.

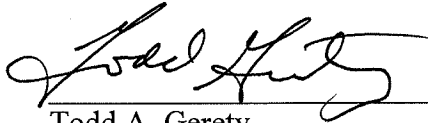
For these reasons, neither Leck nor Maloney, alone or in combination, teach or suggest an “antenna device being operable to supply energy in a non-contact manner from outside the seal body to the switching circuit and to provide non-contact transmission of data from the switching circuit regardless of whether the external circuit bridge is an open or closed circuit” as recited in claim 1. Thus, claim 1 as now amended is patentable, as it is neither anticipated nor obvious in view of the prior art of record.

Furthermore, by virtue of at least their dependency from claim 1 and the additional features recited therein, it is also believed that claims 2 and 8-20 are also patentable.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is believed that claims 1, 2, and 8-20 are in condition for allowance, and it is respectfully requested that the application be passed to issue. If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this case, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,



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